

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 NAIROB 13998 121937Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 CCO-00 ES-01 /010 W
----- 103919 /44
O 121830Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4731
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T NAIROBI 13998

STADIS//////////

STATE FOR SCHAUFEL ONLY; DAR FOR CHARGE ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, US, KE, TZ
SUBJECT: VIOLATION OF TANZANIAN AIRSPACE

1. EMBASSY HAS JUST LEARNED THAT US MARINE CORPS HELICOPTER BASED ABOARD USS GUAM STRAYED INTO TANZANIAN AIR SPACE DURING SUPPORT FLIGHT FROM NAIROBI TO MOMBASA ON DECEMBER 11. HELICOPTER (CH-53) PILOT MISTOOK ARUSHA RADIO BEACON FOR A BEACON IN KENYA. BY THE TIME HE DISCOVERED HIS ERROR, HE WAS OVER LAKE AMBUSSEL (APPROX 37' 15" EAST, 3' 55" SOUTH). HE THEN PROCEEDED DUE EAST TO MOMBASA. HE WAS PROBABLY OVER TANZANIA FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR, BETWEEN 1130 AND 1230 LOCAL (0830 AND 0930 GMT). HE TOLD EMBOFF HE HAD NO VOICE CONTACT WITH ANYONE ON GROUND IN TANZANIA, NOR DID HE HAVE VISUAL CONTACT WITH ANY OTHER AIRCRAFT. NEVERTHELESS, JUDGING BY HIS ROUTE, HE MUST HAVE PASSED OVER KILIMANJARO AIRPORT, AND HE MAY HAVE BEEN NOTED ON THEIR RADAR. BY HIS SPEED AND ALTITUDE, HE COULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN FOR A LIGHT PRIVATE AIRCRAFT.

2. PILOT REPORTED NAVIGATION PROBLEMS TO HIS SUPERIORS ABOARD USS GUAM ON DECEMBER 11, BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THEY ARE AWARE HE VIOLATED TANZANIAN AIR SPACE. PILOT GAVE DETAILS IN PARA ONE TO EMBOFF AFTER RETURN TO NAIROBI IN CONNECTION WITH DEC 12 FLY-BY. (ALL HELICOPTERS AND AV-8 HARRIERS RETURNED SAFELY ABOARD GUAM AS OF 1600 GMT 12 DEC).

3. IN VIEW OF NO REACTION BY ANYONE AS OF NOW, EMBASSY
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BELIEVES BEST COURSE OF ACTION FROM STANDPOINT OF US-KENYA

AND KENYA-TANZANIAN RELATIONS IS TO SAY NOTHING TO EITHER KENYAN OR TANZANIAN GOVERNMENTS UNLESS TANZANIANS RAISE INCIDENT WITH US. IF THEY DO SO, WE SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE VIOLATION, CITE NAVIGATION ERROR AS REASON, AND EXPRESS REGRET.

4. IF DEPARTMENT OR EMBASSY DAR HAVE DIFFERENT VIEW AND IT IS DECIDED TO VOLUNTEER INFORMATION TO TANZANIA, WE WOULD WANT TO INFORM KENYANS SIMULTANEOUSLY OR IF POSSIBLE A LITTLE BIT IN ADVANCE. SIMILARLY, REQUEST EMBASSY DAR INFORM US ASAP IF TANZANIANS RAISE MATTER.
MARSHALL

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIRSPACE VIOLATIONS, HELICOPTERS, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NAIROB13998
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760458-0680
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761250/aaaabqpe.tel
Line Count: 72
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUL 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <19 OCT 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VIOLATION OF TANZANIAN AIRSPACE
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, US, KE, TZ
To: STATE DAR ES SALAAM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006